

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT  
for  
August 21, 2008  
MEETING NO. 08-08**

***CONSENT AGENDA***

<b>APPLICATION:</b>	HDC2009-00442
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	19 Thomas Street, Frieda's Cottage
<b>ACCEPTED:</b>	July 29, 2008
<b>45 DAY LIMIT:</b>	September 12, 2008
<b>OWNER:</b>	Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation, Ltd.
<b>REQUEST:</b>	Install range exhaust, attic vents and AC system
<b>STAFF:</b>	Cindy Kebba



Frieda's Cottage

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Staff recommends approval with conditions, given the following findings:**

1. The exterior alterations will not have a negative impact on the architectural integrity of the house, they will be installed in unobtrusive locations, and they are appropriate to allow for modern residential use.

**DRAFT MOTION OF APPROVAL:**

Finding HDC2009-00442 for installation of a range exhaust on the west façade, attic vents on both the east and west facades, and an air conditioning system (including a metal condenser on a composite pad and line set) on the west façade appropriate to adapting the 1936 house to modern residential use and with no negative impact on the architectural integrity of the house, I move approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The air conditioning condenser on the west façade should be screened with evergreen plant material. If fence screening is preferred, the fence must be submitted to the HDC for review.

**BACKGROUND:** The applicant's goal is to restore the exterior of Frieda's Cottage at Chestnut Lodge to its period of significance, the period (1936-1957) when the house was occupied by Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, while adapting it to modern living. There have been few alterations to the exterior since 1957. Exterior work done by Peerless Rockville (since taking ownership of the house in 2007) has consisted of repairs and replacements in-kind where necessary.

**Previous Requests:**

HDC2007-00398                      Replace cellar doors and porch screen panels, trees/landscaping

**Property Area:** 15,249 Sq. Ft.

**Structure Area:** 2,090 sq. ft.

**Zone:** RS-HD

**Development Standards:** Frieda's Cottage lot is 15,249 square feet. Per the PRU, the minimum lot size is 9,000 square feet. The minimum front yard setback is 12 feet. The maximum height of the house is 35 feet. The maximum lot coverage is 25%. The proposed work meets all of the zone requirements.

**City of Rockville Permits Required:**

HDC Certificate of Approval  
Mechanical and electrical permits

**BACKGROUND**

*Historic, archeological, or architectural value and significance of the site or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area.*

✓ **Contributing**  
**Non-Contributing**

**Significance:** Frieda's Cottage was built on the Chestnut Lodge hospital site for Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann. Dr. Fromm-Reichmann was an internationally recognized leader in psychiatry and psychoanalysis. She lived in the house from the time it was completed in 1936, the year after her arrival in the United States, until her death in 1957. Although she was offered prestigious positions at other mental health facilities, she remained at Chestnut Lodge when Dr. Bullard offered to build her a personal residence on the Chestnut Lodge grounds.

**Background History:** Frieda's Cottage was part of the 20-acre Chestnut Lodge property purchased by Chestnut Lodge Properties, Inc. in 2003. The front 5 acres of Chestnut Lodge, including Frieda's Cottage, was added back into the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District in 2002 after this acreage and the structures on it were removed from the district in the 1970s. In 2001, the Mayor and Council asked the HDC to define the building hierarchy on the Chestnut Lodge site. The HDC identified Frieda's Cottage as one of the two most significant structures on the Chestnut Lodge site; the other being the main Lodge building.

The title for Lot 4, Block A (Frieda's Cottage and its lot) was transferred to Peerless Rockville on June 26, 2007. Since then, Peerless Rockville has been rehabilitating the house to put it back into residential use.

## **VIEWS OF AFFECTED RESOURCES:**

See drawings attached to application for locations of equipment/vents.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT and MATERIALS:**

*The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the entire structure and to the surrounding area and the general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.*

1. Range exhaust: the applicant wishes to install a range vent for a restored gas range to be installed in the kitchen. It is not required by City code, but is being done to assure safety. The vent will be on the west exterior wall to reduce its visibility. (see drawings attached to application). The duct will be 4" diameter galvanized steel and the 12-inch square vent cap will be metal, painted white to match the house siding.
2. Attic vents: The attic has never been vented. The applicant intends to cut a rectangular vent in each gable end (east and west) for air circulation in the attic. The horizontally-louvered wood vents will be approximately 12 inches wide by 18 inches. They will be painted white.
3. Air conditioning system: A high velocity system was chosen by the applicant as it will be less intrusive on the interior than a conventional AC system. The exterior portion will be located on the west façade between the chimney and the southwest corner of the house. It will require a metal condenser unit on a gray composite pad plus a line set (copper, condensate drain, and wiring between indoor and outdoor units) that will exit the house from the interior knee wall space through the eave on the second floor and run down the façade, covered by a downspout and tucked as close to the chimney as possible or, if this is not workable, it will be located on the southwest corner of the house. Both locations are shown in the application but the former is preferred by the applicant. The condenser measures 35 inches high x 30 ½ inches wide x 35 inches deep. The pad is 36 inches square and 3 inches high.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

*To any other factors, including aesthetic factors, which the Commission deems to be pertinent, including items such as cost, tax credits, options, and alternative plans.*

## **COMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES:**

Staff finds that the proposed alterations meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #9 and the City of Rockville Technical Guide for Exterior Alteration # 10, Utilities, Code Compliance, ADA in that the AC unit and vents will be located in unobtrusive locations.

Attachments: Certificate of Approval application with attachments